

Press Release

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SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON CONGRESS TO SAVE FUNDING FOR PBS

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky today participated in a press conference with Representative Ed Markey, Senator Hillary Clinton, Members of Congress, children, and beloved PBS television characters in a rally to save funding for PBS. Representative Schakowsky joined her colleagues in accepting a petition of nearly 1 million supporters of public broadcasting, and pledged to support the restoration of funding for PBS.

Representative Schakowsky remarks are below, as prepared for delivery:

"The Future of American Media Caucus, of which I am a founding member, recently held a briefing with Bill Moyers, the former host of PBS's 'Now.' He was put under the watchful eye of Big Brother by CPB Chairman Kenneth Tomlinson because there were some who believed that his investigative reporting on the war in Iraq and the state of the economy were too liberal. □ And, because his independent journalism did not mirror the Republican agenda, the speech police found the excuse they've been looking for to mount a serious attack against PBS."

"Public broadcasting is not code for state-controlled media.□ When Congress created PBS, it did so to ensure that the public had access to information that is not driven by political ideology or commercial interests, and that represents a broad range of views.□ It was not to reflect the 'Republican mandate' as Mr. Tomlinson has claimed."

"What's next? Is Mr. Tomlinson or the Bush Administration going to gag Big Bird because the Sesame Street theme, with the verses of, 'Sunny Day, Sweepin' the clouds away, On my way to where the air is sweet,' is against the President's so-called 'Clear Sky Initiative?'"

"The ever-increasing consolidation of media ownership makes it even more urgent that PBS be fully funded and protected from political interference."

"Chicago's PBS stations, WTTW and WYCC, have over 600 programs that my constituents know and trust. This is true across the United States. According to the nonpartisan Roper polling firm, Americans consider PBS to be among the nation's 'most trusted' organizations and one of the 'most valuable' services taxpayers receive, outranked only by national defense."

"It is imperative that funding for PBS be fully restored - and that it be freed from political interference - to protect Americans' access to programming that is educational, thought-provoking, and sometimes contrary to their own views. We should be afraid of censorship and infringement of our fundamental constitutional right to free expression, we should not be afraid of honest reporting and Snuffleupagus."